

# ROTARY INTERNATIONAL DISTRICT 6440 Youth Exchange Program



## Families Hosting - Home to the Children of the World

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Hosting a Rotary Youth Exchange (RYE) student is a wonderful family experience that may have a lasting positive effect on both your family and community. Hosting a Youth Exchange student can be as rewarding as being one. It's an opportunity to make a personal contribution to advancing world understanding while expanding your own horizons and those of your family. And it's a chance to build a relationship with someone special, someone who will be a part of your life for a long time to come.

Your exchange student should be treated as you would treat your own child. The only areas you will probably have outside help with will be counseling and transportation. Otherwise, consider yourself to have another son or daughter. Entering into hosting with this frame of mind is the most rewarding. Ask any family that has hosted before.

**The Whole Family Will Enjoy Learning.** What types of families open their doors to RYE Youth Exchange? All types, that's who! Rotarian and non-Rotarian families, those with young children, grown children, and no children — all have shared the joy of hosting a new son or daughter from another land. All it takes is the willingness to care and a heart that's ready for a touch of adventure. Young children may get their first exposure to another language, different customs, and ways of expressing their feelings. Early experiences frequently may teach tolerance and begin new interests in geography, world history, and other languages. For teenage siblings, an exchange student brings new ideas and broader perspectives about issues facing teens all over the world, not to mention sharing the bathroom before leaving for school.



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*“After having hosted 6 RYE students over the years, I can easily say that it is great to know that I have 6 sons & daughters all around the world who love me like I love them.” - Host father*



#### **It's a Family Experience!**

The education of your family about the geography and cultures of the world may be the best reason to be a host family. Imagine sharing your life, your home, with a young person from Japan, Finland, or maybe Belgium. When your family decides to welcome a RYE student into your life, everyday experiences take on new meaning. You'll learn about another culture and

language without ever leaving home. Watch your family gain deeper understanding of American traditions and the melding of our cultures as you introduce them to your new son or daughter. Watch as new perspectives open horizons when differences turn out to really be similarities. It's a great education and lots of fun, too!

**RYE** brings a global perspective into your home. No matter where your teenagers' interests are centered, the flexibility, insights, and the concern for others gained by hosting an exchange student in your home will help prepare for life in a world becoming more diverse and demanding every day.

For a family that doesn't have children or have grown children, hosting is still an option. **RYE** promotes the use of 3 selected families over the year for each student to provide exposure to greater cultural diversity. Your ability to provide a caring home is not based upon age or wealth- only the desire to further the Rotary ideals of greater world understanding and peace through youth exchange.

#### **Expand Your Horizons**

By sharing your interests and love with a **RYE** student, families receive that same love and lifelong friendships in return. Imagine a Brazilian flying behind a speed boat on a tube, hair straight back, with the biggest grin you've seen since your son caught a foul ball at the Cubs game. Here's the opportunity to introduce your exchange son or daughter to American culture by going to a Bears game in December, or window shopping along Michigan Avenue, or taking that trip to Grandma's house for Thanksgiving. Whatever your favorite activities are, sharing them with a



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**RYE** student can make them more special as you create lasting memories shared with someone special.

#### Who are RYE Students?

Each **RYE** student is between 16 and 18.5 years old and may come from one of 30-40 countries where Rotary promotes Youth Exchange. Most students arrive in early



August so they can move in before the beginning of the fall semester of high school. The District has a small number of Winter Inbounds who arrive in January from the southern hemisphere. The typical **RYE** student is proficient in English and is an academically motivated student, although most will not receive any credit for the classes taken while in your high school. Even if your student has already graduated from school back home, they are required to attend school here for the entire time they are here. Students are selected by a sponsoring Rotary Club in their home country to be a young ambassador to the USA. Your student will have received

orientations before and after coming to Illinois and understands that the local Rotary Club will provide ongoing support. When your student arrives at your home, the District recommends that you promptly go through the [First Night Questionnaire](#) to explain how your house operates and what your student should expect living with you.

#### Money

**RYE** students will bring their own spending money and the host Rotary club will pay a monthly allowance and will also pay all academic school expenses and school lunches. Frequently, the club may also provide extra allowance to the student but it is not required. Host families are not paid by Rotary and voluntarily provide room and board at no expense to the student. Rotary will also pay for the yearlong health insurance policy required for the exchange. Costs for trips, gifts, clothing, and the optional Bus Tour, vary and are left to the student and their parents to cover. Hosts are eligible for a small per month federal tax deduction for hosting a student.

*hey!! this is Cris who is going back to Peru today :), I want to thank you for these 10 1/2 months here. I have learn a lot, you have no idea, like is not bad to be shy is just the way I am, or have a bigger mind (accept more new things), learn to love people of different cultures, find the good part of everything...and is just so hard to say BYE, really hard, ... is mix of feelings right now, thanks for be friends and like a family, con mucho amor un beso para ustedes  
Cristina Berrocal going home to Peru*

#### Insurance

Each student is covered by a Rotary contracted health program that is not a PPO or group policy. Liability insurance is also provided. Host families along with the student make the medical decisions with the student (bio-parents) being responsible to pay the deductible charges. For larger decisions we encourage consultations with the Committee and the bio-parents. Click here for more details on [Insurance](#).

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#### Community

**RYE** students bring diversity and other cultures into your community. No matter what path today's students choose, the need to expand their knowledge of the world is increasing rapidly. RYE students frequently give programs on their culture and country to schools and community groups. Their ability to knock down the walls of bias is beneficial to people of all ages and races.

#### Cultural Exchange

This program expects the student to attend classes and is not a travel exchange.

The primary emphasis of a **RYE** exchange is cultural even though school attendance



is a major requirement. We also think that sharing the couch in front of the TV on a cold winter night is just as much a cultural event as attending the opera for many of our students. Families get to share their heritage and customs with an eager learner who brings new twists to many activities. New ideas are fun to share. We feel that family life is just as important as school, and we will readily approve family trips and outings to cultural and Rotary events as good reasons to take

your student out of school for short periods.

#### School

Teachers search for effective ways to spark interest in international study. **RYE** provides diversity and brings current world events into the classroom, and encourages our youth to study other languages. What better way for young Americans to learn about the world than by studying, talking, and laughing with a peer from the other side of the world? It is a fact that **RYE** is one of very few programs readily accepted by many high schools within the District borders. Frequently, one of the school administrators is a Rotarian who will be an additional spoke in the support system. Your student will take courses typical for their age, and may participate in extracurricular opportunities such as sports, music, or drama. If your school district allows it and your student is eligible, he or she may receive a diploma, but most students receive only a certificate of attendance. Most **RYE** students do not receive any credit back home for classes taken here. We do expect our students to pass all classes, and daily school attendance is mandatory.

#### The Rotary Support System

**RYE** takes seriously our objective to assist young people to have a successful exchange year. We realize that without host families, the program could not function. In light of that, our District makes every effort to prepare and support them through the entire year. We realize that all host families and Rotarians are volunteers, so our training is also voluntary but strongly recommended.



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District 6440 has a dedicated, caring committee and includes many Rotarian



volunteers available to train and support you. We feel that the most important spoke in this system is the local YEO (Youth Exchange Officer) and Club Counselor from the host Rotary Club- your personal contacts and most valuable resources.

From the beginning, your YEO will be there to answer questions and alert you to when District training sessions are being held. Through the year, your YEO will be in

touch with you and your student ensuring that all is well and helping to arrange for transportation to [RYE](#) events which are usually scheduled for once a month.

Our Rotary volunteers are trained to help you and your student successfully solve and adjust to the speed bumps an exchange can present. If difficulties arise, you and your YEO can be assured that the District Committee will be there to step in to help find a solution. Often, the only thing that's needed is a chance to talk things over. Our next resource is the volunteers at the Central States ([CSRYE](#)) level who also are committed to achieving the highest degree of success for this program.

#### **Secret to a Successful Exchange: Preparation**

After being selected to become a host family by the local Rotary Club, you will receive direct answers and guidance at our orientation seminars. You will meet other new families and some more experienced hosting veterans. Policies and procedures will be explained while we provide valuable insight on what to expect and how to make your exchange experience positively memorable.

Those of us with exchange experience realize that not all students are going to please everyone or follow all the rules- they are teenagers! Our training and discussion groups cover ideas and hints on topics such as dealing with a student who doesn't speak English well, to what is the suggested action when students decide to break the District [RYE Rules of Conduct](#). When the committee determines that a student has gone past the boundaries too far, we will take immediate steps to return that student to the bio-parents permanently. Prior to that event happening, we will conduct counseling and provide guidance to try to prevent any early return. The committee gathers all the students together multiple times to explain the program guidelines and rules as well as the specific travel guidelines. You can count on caring, experienced support every step of the way in place with RYE.



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#### What Are Our Responsibilities As A Host Family?

The primary responsibility is to accept the exchange student as a new member of your family. Ideally each student will live with 3 families during their stay, each section 3 to 4 months. Every attempt will be made to have all families located within the same high school attendance area, but those who can provide adequate daily transportation may be considered. The student will be governed not only by the rules of the program but also by the rules of your household. Each family is responsible to understand and follow the guidelines as discussed in the District [Host Family Manual](#) which may be downloaded from this site. Prior to having our student move into your home you will be required to attend a training seminar where you will learn and discuss the guidelines necessary to run the program. You are responsible for the care and safety of the exchange student the same as for your own children. Although you might become a bit more of the soccer mom or dad for normal everyday activities, it is not your responsibility to act as a taxi service or a tour guide. Rotarians and the Youth Exchange Officer from the hosting club will be helping in these areas. The important ingredients for hosting are that you like teenagers, are able to communicate with them, have an open heart and are willing to share your culture.



#### How do I apply to become a Host Family with Rotary Youth Exchange?

If you're interested in becoming a Host family please [contact us](#) your local [Rotary Club](#) and request more information and an in-house interview. The club will require that you fill out an [application](#), which may be downloaded from this website. Every person 18 and older in the household must authorize a [criminal background check](#) and provide a list of [references](#) who can attest to your qualifications. If you and your family have an interest, contact [RYE](#) and discover what you can gain! You too may host the Children of the World.



#### Host Family checklist:

- ✓ Welcome our student as your own child, a full member of the family. What makes each exchange experience unique is that each family has their own culture to share.
- ✓ To accept and be willing to enforce the Rules of Conduct and Travel Guidelines.
- ✓ To not expect the student to be a nanny or here to work for you.
- ✓ To share time with the student, especially in the first days of the exchange-before school starts.
- ✓ To have the ability to minimize and solve the inevitable minor problems that may arise, and to strengthen the avenues of communication

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- ✓ To provide warmth and respect for all.
- ✓ To have flexibility; be secure and confident enough to be able to adapt to make for room for individuals.
- ✓ To be a healthy family; if there is a serious emotional or physical problem, the extra strain of adjusting to a RYE student can be a difficult situation.
- ✓ To be realistic about why they want to host an RYE student in their home. It must not be because they think it is something they should do, and not as a solution to a family problem, and not out of desire for prestige or social acceptance. All the members of the host family must want to participate because one uncooperative family member can make an unhappy experience for all.
- ✓ To be able to afford the expense of an extra child in the family.
- ✓ To have enough space to provide the student with a bed and study area of his or her own. If a room is to be shared, it must be with a child of the same sex.
- ✓ To be willing to provide transportation to activities. Our student is not allowed to drive and may not take driver education classes.
- ✓ To be prepared to respect the religious beliefs of your student and not require participation in their own church or yours.
- ✓ To not treat your student as a special guest. It is expected that the exchange student will perform chores as the other children in the family do. Our student may not have a job outside of the home.



Alex- Belgium



Melani- Philippines



Andrey- Costa Rica



Gunnar- Germany